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Introduction



Chinese Eight Regional Cuisines.

Introduction to Chinese Cuisinology

" If I need to choose what kind of food I will be fed for the rest of my life, I will choose Chinese cuisine without any hesitation."

- Yidi Wang

Learning Objectives:

- Capacity to integrate knowledge and to analyse and evaluate a Chinese cuisine at a local and global levels, even when limited information is available.
- Capacity to identify the general type of a Chinese dish.
- Capacity to appreciate the differences between Western and Chinese culinary cultures.
- Capacity to comprehend basic principles of Anhui Cuisine.

- Capacity to recognize some unorthodox Chinese dishes.

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Introduction

Chinese cuisine is an important part of Chinese culture, which includes cuisine originating from the diverse regions of China, as well as from Chinese people in other parts of the world. Because of the Chinese diaspora and historical power of the country, Chinese cuisine has influenced many other cuisines in Asia, with modifications made to cater to local palates. Chinese food staples such as rice, soy sauce, noodles, tea, and tofu, and utensils such as chopsticks and the wok, can now be found worldwide.

The preference for seasoning and cooking techniques of Chinese provinces depend on differences in historical background and ethnic groups. Geographic features including mountains, rivers, forests and deserts also have a strong effect on the local available ingredients, considering that the climate of China varies from tropical in the south to subarctic in the northeast. Imperial, royal and noble preference also plays a role in the change of Chinese cuisines. Because of imperial expansion and trading, ingredients and cooking techniques from other cultures are integrated into Chinese cuisines over time.

Eight Regional Cuisine



Chinese dishes

Eight Regional Cuisines

Culinary traditions

If you ever have the chance to travel through China, you will not only see the country's unique cultural phenomena such as choreographed park dancing or Pomeranians everywhere, but you will likely also experience one or more of its major cuisines. You may not be able to experience all the different types of cuisine without traveling to China or a city with a prominent Chinese population!

There are many styles of cooking in China, but Chinese chefs have identified **eight** culinary traditions as the best. These have set the course of how Chinese cook food, and are looked to as models. Each of these schools has a distinct style and different strengths. Their unique attributes are formed by a combination of geographical differences, cultural shifts, and availability of produce and resources through out the different regions. As a

general rule of thumb, rice is main staple food in southern China, as the warmer and wetter south makes it more ideal for its growth. On the other hand, dumplings and noodles are more commonly consumed in the drier, colder north.

Many of these cuisines may be unfamiliar with the Western palate. Today, we describe each of the cuisines in detail, so you can see which ones you have already checked off your list, and which ones you still have to try!

[\[footnote\]](#)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_cuisine

| Note: Eight Regional Cuisine | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|----------|
| Note: <i>Chinese eight regional cuisine</i> are Anhui (徽菜; Huīcài), Cantonese (粤菜; Yuècài), Fujian (闽菜; Mǐncài), Hunan (湘菜; Xiāngcài), Jiangsu (苏菜; Sūcài), Shandong (鲁菜; Lǔcài), Sichuan (川菜; Chuāncài), and Zhejiang (浙菜; Zhècài) cuisines. | | | |
| | | | |
| Full Name | Shorthand name | Originality | Features |
| | | | |

| Full Name | Shorthand name | Originality | Features |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|--|
| Anhui Cuisine | Hui Cuisine | Anhui | Uses many wild plants and animals as ingredients, favoring stewing and more oil |
| Cantonese Cuisine | Yue Cuisine | Guangdong, Hongkong | Sweeter, favoring braising and stewing, adding various mild sauces |
| Fujian Cuisine | Min Cuisine | Fujian | Lighter, with a mild sweet and sour taste, using ingredients from the sea and the mountains |
| Hunan Cuisine | Xiang Cuisine | Hunan | Quite spicy, with a hot and sour taste, favoring sautéing, stir-frying, steaming and smoking |
| | | | |

| Full Name | Shorthand name | Originality | Features |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------|--|
| Jiangsu Cuisine | Su Cuisine | Jiangsu | Fresh, moderately salty and sweet, precise cooking techniques, favoring seafood, soups and artistic, colorful presentation |
| Shangdong Cuisine | Lu Cuisine | Shandong | Salty and crispy, favoring braising and seafood |
| Sichuan Cuisine | Chuan Cuisine | Sichuan | Spicy and bold, often mouth-numbing, using lots of chili, garlic, ginger, and peanuts |
| Zhejiang Cuisine | Zhe Cuisine | Zhejiang | Mellow, using fresh seafood, freshwater fish, and bamboo shoots, and a wide variety of cooking methods. |

Originality, shorthand name and features.

Note: Most Chinese Restaurants in America make Sichuan Cuisines. Sichuan Cuisines are probably the most popular one among eight. I also like Sichuan Cuisines, but I can't totally handle their spiciness.

Example:

Exercise:

Problem:

What is the most popular Chinese Cuisine that author thinks? Does the author of this book like it?

Solution:

Sichuan(Chuan) Cuisine; yes he likes it.

General description of each cuisine

Sichuan Cuisine

The most widely-adapted cuisine into Western society (and often referred to as "Szechuan" or "Szechuanese,") Sichuan cuisine is known for big, bold flavors and an undeniable spicy taste. Common flavor enhancers include peppers, garlic, ginger, and peanuts. Sichuan cuisine is unique in its abundant use of peppercorns, which cause a tingly and numbing sensation in the mouth. You might want to keep cold water handy to rinse away the fire! [\[footnote\]](#)

<http://blog.tutorming.com/expats/types-of-chinese-food>



Laziji is a stir-fried dish, which consists of marinated then deep-fried pieces of chicken, dried Sichuan chilli peppers, spicy bean paste, Sichuan peppers, garlic, and ginger.

Shandong Cuisine

Salty and flavorful, Shandong Cuisine favors slow braising as a technique and adds in a ton of shallots, scallions and garlic. Shandong cuisine has the longest history of all the eight cuisine types, and was once the favored cuisine of the royal court. Due to Shandong's proximity to the ocean, many of its most famous dishes have seafood as the central ingredient.



Braised spare ribs with gluten, a common Shandong dish.

Jiangsu Cuisine

Originating from the temperature zone in China from cities such as SuZhou, Nanjing, and Yang Zhou, Jiangsu cuisine features a balanced approach to flavor. Its tastes are sweet and salty, mild and soothing to the stomach. The term "红烧 (hóng shāo)" literally means "red braised," and is a cooking method that is dominant in this region. It results in a sweet and salty, caramelized flavor.



Squirrel Fish is a fried fish made with rice vinegar, sugar and a pinch of salt.

Zhejiang Cuisine

A vast and diverse cuisine that makes heavy use of oil and condiments for strong flavor, Zhejiang Cuisine is unique in its use of techniques such as quick-frying, stir-frying, braising, and smoking. The region produces freshwater fish and shrimps, which are usually cooked to be crispy yet tender.



Dongpo Pork is made by pan-frying and then red cooking pork belly. The pork is cut thick, about two inches square, and should consist equally of fat and lean meat.

Anhui Cuisine

Developed in the Huangshan Mountains, Anhui cuisine makes use of plenty of wild plants and animals. Ham is often added to dishes as a flavor enhancer, and rock candy added for additional sweetness. Steaming and braising is a common technique, so Anhui cuisine is typically lighter in flavor compared to some of the other cuisine types.



Bagongshan stinky tofu is a Chinese form of fermented tofu that has a strong odor.

Note: The author of this book actually comes from Hefei, the capital of Anhui Province. That's why there is an independent section about Anhui Cuisine

Cantonese Cuisine

Have you ever had dim sum? That originated from Guangdong cuisine! Most commonly known as Cantonese cuisine, Guangdong chefs focus on using the freshest ingredients to create a light, clean dish that showcase

natural flavors. Guangdong cuisine tends to be sweeter, favoring techniques such as braising and stewing.



Dim sum is a style of dumplings prepared as small bite-sized portions of food served in small steamer baskets or on a small plate. Dim sum dishes are usually served with tea and together form a full tea brunch.

Fujian Cuisine

Thanks to its proximity to the sea, Fujian Cuisine became known for fresh seafood and seafood based soups. Fujianese chefs tend to use wine in their cooking, leading to a "pickled" taste for many dishes. A famous Fujianese dish is called Buddha Jumping Over the Wall, which includes abalone, shark fin, sea cucumber, scallops, bamboo shoots, and Shaoxing wine. However, with the controversy in shark-finning, more chefs are choosing to omit that particular ingredient.



A bowl of Fujian thick soup, or geng (羹).
Fujian-style cuisine contains soups, soupy
dishes, and stews.

Hunan Cuisine

Similar to Sichuan cuisine, Hunan cuisine is hot, hot, hot. Dried chilies provide much of the spicy flavor, and often lead to bright red colored dishes. Many American favorites such as Orange Beef and Crispy Duck all originate from Hunan.



Steamed fish head in chili sauce, a classic Hunan Cuisine.

Note: Meat dishes are the essence of Chinese food, but still there are lots of vegetable dishes people can choose if you are not meat lover.

Exercise

Exercise:

Problem: What is your favourite Chinese Cuisine?

Exercise:

Problem:

How many commonly recognized regional Chinese Cuisines are there?
What are they?

Solution:

8; Anhui (徽菜 Huīcài), Cantonese (粤菜; Yuècài), Fujian (闽菜; Mǐncài), Hunan (湘菜; Xiāngcài), Jiangsu (苏菜; Sūcài), Shandong (鲁菜; Lǔcài), Sichuan (川菜; Chuāncài), and Zhejiang (浙菜; Zhècài) cuisines.

Exercise:

Problem: Among eight cuisines, which ones are spicy?

Solution:

Sichuan and Hunan.

Culinary Culture



Beef fried rice

Note: **Rice** and **noodles** are the main staple foods in China.

Rice

Rice is a major staple food for people from rice farming areas in southern China. Steamed rice, usually white rice, is the most commonly eaten form. People in southern China also like to use rice to make congee as breakfast. Rice is also used to produce beer, baijiu and vinegars. Glutinous rice ("sticky rice") is a variety of rice used in specialty dishes such as lotus leaf rice and glutinous rice balls.



Jasmine Rice is the major
rice in China

Note: Rice university has nothing to do with the food rice. Actually, personal experience tells me that rice is really bad at Rice.

Noodle

Chinese noodles come dry or fresh in a variety of sizes, shapes and textures and are often served in soups or fried as toppings. Some varieties, such as Shou Mian (寿面, literally noodles of longevity), is an avatar of long life and good health according to Chinese traditions. Noodles can be served hot or cold with different toppings, with broth, and occasionally dry (as is the case with mi-fen). Noodles are commonly made with rice flour or wheat flour, but other flours such as soybean are also used in minor groups.



Beef Noodle